

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DODE-00 L-03 CG-00 DOTE-00 PM-04

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/055 W

-----051837Z 021239 /47

O R 051637Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2724

INFO AMEMBASSY KINGSTON IMMEDIATE

COMNAVFORCARIB

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 1001

KINGSTON FOR HEAVNER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, AC

SUBJ: MILITARY FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS - BIO DATA ON ANTIGUA  
NEGOTIATING TEAM

REF: (A) BRIDGETOWN 991 (NOTAL), (B) STATE 093429

BIO INFO PROMISED REFTEL (A) FOLLOWS:

PREMIER VERE C. BIRD, SR.

ANTIGUA'S PRINCIPAL POLITICAL LEADER FOR 25 YEARS UNTIL  
HIS OUSTER AT ANTIGUA'S POLLS IN 1971. BIRD RETURNED TO POWER  
IN FEBRUARY 1976. SINCE THEN, HE HAS MOVED TO ESTABLISH HIS  
GOVT'S CONTROL MORE FIRMLY AND TO DISCREDIT THE OPPOSITION.  
HE HAS ALSO BROUGHT TWO OF HIS SONS INTO THE GOVT.: LESTER  
AS DEPUTY PREMIER AND V.C. JR. AS CHAIRMAN OF THE PUBLIC  
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UTILITIES AUTHORITY. HE REMAINS PRO-AMERICAN AND HAS BEEN  
DESCRIBED AS EASY TO WORK WITH, GIVEN HIS HABIT OF DELEGATING  
AUTHORITY WHEN POSSIBLE. TO A CERTAIN EXTENT, THE YOUNGER  
MEMBERS OF HIS GOVT (INCLUDING LESTER) SEE HIM  
AS A MAN OF A DIFFERENT ERA, OLD-FASHIONED AND  
UNIMAGINATIVE AT TIMES. AMONG OTHER DELEGATION MEMBERS,  
WILLIAMS IS A LONG-TIME FRIEND AND POLITICAL SUPPORTER,

WHILE CHALLENGER, A CIVIL SERVANT, SHARES MANY OF HIS  
BASICALLY CONSERVATIVE VIEWS.

DEPUTY PREMIER LESTER B. BIRD

NOW 37, LESTER BIRD WAS BORN IN NEW YORK AND IS AN  
AMERICAN CITIZEN, BUT DOES NOT CARRY AN AMERICAN PASSPORT.  
HE IS A LAWYER BY PROFESSION BUT FOLLOWED HIS FATHER INTO  
POLITICS AND IS NOW GENERALLY ACKNOWLEDGED AS LIKELY TO  
SUCCEED HIS FATHER AS PREMIER, POSSIBLY BEFORE THE END OF  
THE LATTER'S PRESENT TERM. LESTER APPEARS MORE AMERICAN  
IN STYLE THAN HIS FATHER AND IS OSTENSIBLY OPEN AND FRANK.  
BUT HE IS A GOOD PRACTICAL POLITICIAN WITH A CERTAIN TOUCH  
OF MACHIEVELLIANISM. IN THE EMBASSY VIEW, LESTER, NOT HIS  
FATHER, WILL LEAD THE SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SUPPORT  
OF HIS CLOSE ASSOCIATES PHILLIPS AND MARSHALL.

ATTORNEY GENERAL COSMOS O.R. PHILLIPS

PHILLIPS WAS THE SUBJECT OF AN FS-405 REPORT DATED  
JUNE 23, 1976. ALSO 37 BUT BORN IN GRENADA, PHILLIPS WAS  
APPOINTED ATTORNEY GENERAL IN 1976 AFTER 16 YEARS OF LAW  
PRACTICE IN ANTIGUA. HE IS A FRIEND OF LESTER BIRD AND  
OWES HIS APPOINTMENT TO THE LATTER; REPORTEDLY, PREMIER  
BIRD HAS DOUBTS AS TO PHILLIPS' INTEGRITY. HE REMAINS A DIRECTOR  
OF THE WEST INDIES OIL COMPANY, ALTHOUGH THIS WOULD  
APPEAR TO CONSTITUTE A CONFLICT OF INTEREST.

MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS ERNEST E. WILLIAMS (MIDDLE INITIAL  
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IS "E" NOT "L", AS IT APPEARS IN REFTEL (A))

BORN IN 1915, WILLIAMS IS A LONG TIME TRADE UNION AND  
POLITICAL ASSOCIATE OF PREMIER BIRD. DURING THE LATTER'S  
YEARS OUT OF POWER, HE SERVED AS LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.  
HE CAN BE EXPECTED TO FOLLOW THE PREMIER'S LEAD. AN ELECTED  
REP OF ANTIGUA SINCE 1946, WILLIAMS HAS SPOKEN  
WARMLY OF THE US AND HIS ASSOCIATIONS WITH AMERICANS. IN  
THE WORDS OF THE FORMER DEPUTY BRITISH GOVERNMENT REPRESENTA-  
TIVE, "HE'S A NICE, OLD CHAP."

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT) HUGH MARSHALL

BORN AROUND 1940, MARSHALL IS A MEMBER OF THE ANTIGUAN  
SENATE AND PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY IN THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT. (OF WHICH LESTER BIRD IS THE MINISTER). HE IS  
DESCRIBED AS ARTICULATE AND PERSUASIVE AND IS A FRIEND AND  
SUPPORTER OF DEPUTY PREMIER BIRD. LIKE HARRIS (SEE BELOW),  
HE IS ANATHEMA TO THE OPPOSITION.

MINISTER OF FINANCE REUBEN HARRIS

HARRIS IS THE SUBJECT OF AN FS-405 DATED JUNE 21, 1976. HE VISITED THE US ON AN IVP LEADER GRANT IN 1976. BORN IN MONTSEERRAT AROUND 1939, HARRIS HAS LONG MADE HIS HOME IN ANTIGUA. HE ONLY JOINED PREMIER BIRD'S PARTY A FEW YEARS AGO AND WON HIS SEAT IN PARLIAMENT ONLY AFTER THE ELECTION RESULTS WENT TO COURT. AS FINANCE MINISTER HE HAS IMPRESSED EMBASSY OFFICERS AS HAVING SOME ABILITY. HE HAS A DEGREE IN ECONOMICS. HOWEVER, HE IS A "GUT-FIGHTER," POLITICALLY SPEAKING, AND IS CORDIALLY DETESTED BY THE OPPOSITION.

PERMANENT SECRETARY FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND SECURITY  
ERIC K.G.CHALLENGER

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CHALLENGER IS 52 YEARS OLD AND HAS A MORE CONSERVATIVE OUTLOOK THAN THE YOUNGER MEMBERS OF THE NEGOTIATING TEAM. HE IS A LONGTIME MEMBER OF THE CIVIL SERVICE. HE VISITED THE US ON AN IVP LEADER GRANT IN 1973. AS PERMANENT SECRETARY FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CHALLENGER IS CONSIDERED ABLE, DEDICATED, INTELLIGENT AND JUDICIOUS. BASICALLY, HE IS PRO-AMERICAN, THOUGH HE IS NOT ONE TO LET HIS SENTIMENTS INFLUENCE THE PERFORMANCE OF HIS DUTIES.  
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## Message Attributes

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